

Growth and Evolution of the Human Mind

The human being today is not fully evolved, and he is not fully conscious of the damage he is doing to himself and others, and the world at large. He is obstructing the very peace he is craving for. It is like a baby with unsafe toys or a child with dangerous weapons. The human being is still like the animal that is carried away by emotions. Emotions are dominating his mind. His reason is only used to gratify the emotions. That means reason has become a slave of the emotions.

It is important to understand that we humans are animals, though at a more evolved evolutionary level. A part of the animal nature is still within us. We have two minds: an **emotional** animal mind, and a **rational** human mind.

Human intelligence has now evolved to the point where it can begin to understand the workings of the human **body** and use that knowledge to gain control over the **blind emotional impulses** that disturb humanity as well as all life on this planet.

In order to understand this fully, it is necessary to understand that there are two ways of thinking: Theistic and Humanistic. Theistic thinking is of two kinds: Polytheistic and Monotheistic. Polytheists believe in several supernatural beings called gods who control the world. Monotheists believe only in a single God who created the world and runs the world. Humanists do not believe in supernatural beings. They are mainly concerned about human beings and their problems, as well as the human potentials, and even how the human beings can transcend all human weaknesses and become superhuman. Human beings are understood to be a class of animals who are more evolved than the other animals. Buddha was a human being who transcended the common animalistic nature and became Superhuman. This rising above the common animalistic human nature into a totally Superhuman State was achieved by Awakening from the dream of existence. Thus awakened, the Buddha ceased to be an existing being any more. The Buddha was such an Awakened Superhuman Nonbeing who had transcended existence.

It is this human intelligence, when further evolved that can solve the fundamental problem of existence. Yet it is the lack of intelligence, or the wrong use of intelligence that caters to our self-centered emotions, that can lead us to a range of harmful behaviors including crimes, terrorism, and even wars, that exist in the world today. In fact, it is to transform this especial human intelligence for the benefit of all mankind that the Buddha set out to propagate his Glorious Gospel.

Some Western religions have maintained that human beings can never be pure, for only God is pure, and so it would be blasphemous to speak of humans purifying the mind. There is also a common saying in the West, “To err is human, to forgive divine.” This seems to imply that human beings can become pure only through the forgiveness of sins by God, and not through a transformation of the character of the individual. In addition, there has been a historical reason for this Western attitude of mind. A religious community called Puritans, who also spoke of purifying the mind through ascetic self-mortification, had created negative feelings towards purification in Western society.

To put it in another way, we must stop reacting to circumstances and start responding to them. A reaction is emotional and unconscious, while a response is rational and conscious. As already mentioned, the difference between an animal and a human being is that animals are passively reacting emotionally to circumstances, while human beings have the capacity to respond rationally to circumstances, by consciously delaying the reaction to get sufficient time to decide, the appropriate response to make in a given situation. Yet the normal human being does not always choose to respond rationally, they often react emotionally like animals. This means that the normal human being is carrying the animal nature within him until, of course, one has evolved to the fully human level, where one does not react emotionally to circumstances any more, but instead responds rationally to them.

This explanation of human behavior means, the normal human being is not yet fully evolved. This is why we have to go through this process of psychological evolution and learn through meditation to evolve, and grow up. This growth is a conscious psychological process rather than an unconscious biological one. The normal human being, when fully evolved, becomes a supernormal human being, who is free from selfish emotional behavior. He is no more an “ego” or “self,” but a “Sublime” individual who has achieved perfect “selflessness”.

The advantage of being such a believing Buddhist is that such a Buddhist will gain the **great hope** that **his problems will be solved** by **transcending** his **human weaknesses**, by **following a human technique** shown by the Buddha. **Such a Buddhist will begin to make the effort to grow**, evolve and develop his mind, instead of praying and waiting until a supernatural God thinks it fit to bestow his grace upon him, either by forgiving his sins or by purifying him through his supernatural powers.

The practice of Buddhism is based on the concept of BUDDHA, which when properly comprehended brings about not only **self confidence**, but also the desire to evolve and transcend all human weaknesses through **self reliance and the urge to evolve, following** the Buddha. Buddhism is a truly humanistic religion that defines religion as the psychological process of evolution of the human consciousness to a state of perfection called **Buddha**. The Person who discovered that state of Perfection was Siddhartha Gothama. The term “**Buddha**” means **the one who is Awake**. It is very important to understand this concept of BUDDHA, which gives **hope** to mankind. The **Hope** it gives is that every human being has the power to transcend all human weaknesses and reach the highest state of perfection called **Buddha** and thus gain freedom from all sufferings of life. According to the Nikayas, there have been numerous BUDDHAS before Gotama and there will be numerous BUDDHAS after him.

The teaching of Gothama the Buddha is nothing but an explanation of how we too can become Buddhas like him and bring all suffering to an end. All human problems could be solved only through this process of human evolution. The concept of BUDDHA is the ideal of perfection that all human beings look up to, while Buddhism shows how to realize, through human effort here and now. The historical Buddha Gothama testified to this fact through his own experience and the experience of many of his successful disciples.

As Buddhism in its original form was not a mere religion of faith and worship but a psychological technique of growth and evolution of the human consciousness. This is the evolution of a human being by transcending all human weaknesses. This is the definition of the concept of BUDDHA in Buddhism. A Buddhist by definition, however, is one who could believe in this concept of BUDDHA, as the ultimate point in the evolution of the suffering human beings.

Venerable Dr. Madawela Punnaji Maha Thera presents Buddhism as a growth technique that transforms an individual's disposition by changing a person's sense of values and goal in life while it also overcomes the stress and strain of modern living. Venerable points out that the teaching of the Buddha is about a conscious return to the original equilibrium which the normal person loses in childhood due to unconscious emotional impulses. This return to the original equilibrium called NIBBANA is achieved through a psychological technique of conscious evolution of the human consciousness where the human being goes through a paradigm shift and thereby transcends all human weakness and enters a superhuman "divine" state which all religions worship as "God". This means that Buddhism is a humanistic philosophy that recognizes the unity in all religions and defines "religion", "God" and "divinity" from a humanistic point of view. This also means that the Buddha has brought a saving message of hope to the world by introducing a very optimistic philosophy that guarantees a freedom from all human weakness and suffering by means of a conscious human psychological techniques of growth and evolution of the human mind which brings results here and now.